

SERVICE AVIATION

Royal Air Force and
Official Announcements



Fleet Air Arm News:
Military Aviation Abroad



His Majesty arrives in the Royal Airspeed Envoy and salutes as the Royal Standard is broken.

The King at Cranwell

A BITING cold wind and a hard bright sun made Cranwell anything but a genial spot on Wednesday of last week, when King George flew over from Bircham Newton to inspect it. In his R.N.A.S. days, from November, 1917, until August, 1918, H.M.S. *Dædalus* was his station; he was then an administrative officer, and it was not until after the Armistice that he learnt to pilot an aeroplane. The house which he occupied while stationed at Cranwell is still in existence, and is known as York House.

Just on 11.30 a.m. the Royal Airspeed Envoy, painted in Guards colours of red and blue, appeared over the aerodrome, and when Wing Cdr. Fielden landed it a small Royal Standard was hoisted on the roof of the fuselage. The King stepped out, wearing the uniform of a Marshal of the Royal Air Force, and was received by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall (who had flown up the night before in the Air Council's *Rapide*), by the A.O.C.-in-C. of the Training Command, Air Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, and by the A.O.C. of Cranwell, Air Vice-Marshal J. E. A. Baldwin. Cranwell now ranks as a Group in the Training Command, though it is not actually called a Group.

After inspecting the guard of honour of aircraft apprentices and

boy entrants, His Majesty proceeded to carry out a very thorough inspection of the Cadet College and the Electrical and Wireless School. The College now has 144 Flight Cadets in residence, including one Indian. The E. and W. School, on the other hand, has been enormously swollen by the expansion scheme. There are now over 1,200 aircraft apprentices being trained as wireless operator mechanics and instrument makers (they spend three years at the school), while, in addition, there are in residence 700 boy entrants doing a course of sixteen months and over 1,300 airmen on a twelve months' course. Both these latter categories are being trained as wireless operators.

An interesting feature of the inspection was the parade of three Vickers Valentias which are used as flying workshops. Each is fitted with ten wireless sets, and in them the apprentices and boys get air experience. Further training in the air is given in Westland Wallaces. The King entered one of the Valentias and its equipment was explained to him.

The King also displayed much interest in the airmen's institute and the apprentices' institute, which are very comfortably fitted out. In the course of his tour His Majesty met one officer and five airmen who had been stationed at Cranwell with him. The officer is Flt. Lt. H. J. Adkins, who has retired, but has been recalled to uniform as a pro forma officer under the expansion scheme. The men were Flt. Sgt. W. Harris, ex-Warrant Officer J. Leyland, ex-Flt. Sgt. Marshal, and A/Cs C. Wryde and C. W. Wright. The last-named was once the King's batman. Mr. Leyland recalled how Prince Albert and he had both been in the team which had opened the rifle range at Cranwell, and the King said that he remembered it well.

His Majesty had lunch in the cadets' mess, and then inspected the College and the hospital. At 2.40 he embarked once more on his Envoy and took off. The departure was rather informal, and the thousands of airmen and boys who assembled round the aerodrome broke into wave after wave of spontaneous cheers which they kept up until the Envoy was only a small dot in the sky.

Higher Appointments

THE Air Ministry announces the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Patrick Henry Lyon Playfair, C.B., C.V.O., M.C., to be Air Officer Commanding, No. 1 (Bomber) Group, Royal Air Force, with effect from February 21, 1938, vice Air Comdre. Sydney William Smith, O.B.E.

Air Vice-Marshal P. H. L. Playfair joined the R.F.C. from the Royal Artillery in November, 1912, having previously obtained the Royal Aero Club's aviators' certificate (No. 283 of September 3, 1912).

Except for a few intervals, he served in France throughout the War, during which he was awarded the Military Cross and was twice mentioned in despatches. Subsequently he commanded the C.F.S., the Fighting School, Netheravon, and the R.A.F. Base at Leuchars, and in 1925 was appointed Chief Staff Officer at Coastal Area H.Q. In 1928 he was appointed to command the R.A.F. in Palestine and Transjordan and rendered distinguished service in connection with the disturbances in Palestine in 1929. From December, 1930, to September, 1932, he served at the R.A.F. H.Q., India, mainly as Chief Staff Officer, and in October, 1932, was appointed to command No. 23 Group, Inland Area. In September, 1933, he was posted to command the Wessex Bombing Area, and since May,

1936, has been Air Officer Commanding, No. 3 (Bomber) Group.

He was promoted to the rank of Group Captain in January, 1923, to Air Commodore in January, 1930, and to his present rank in January, 1934. He was appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath in the New Year Honours List, 1931, and Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in July, 1935.

The Ministry also announces the appointment of Air Comdre. Arthur Ashford Benjamin Thomson, M.C., A.F.C., to be Air Officer Commanding, No. 3 (B.) Group, Royal Air Force, with effect from February 14, 1938, vice Air Vice-Marshal Patrick Henry Lyon Playfair, C.B., C.V.O., M.C.

Air Comdre. Thomson was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on probation in the R.F.C. Special Reserve in June, 1913, and in the following year was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Warwick Regiment and seconded to the R.F.C. He was appointed Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) in the R.A.F. on April 1, 1918, and in August, 1919, resigned his commission in the R.A.F. with the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

During the Great War he served in France and was awarded the M.C. and bar, and the A.F.C., as well as being mentioned in despatches. He was appointed to command No. 39 Squadron in